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ABSTRACT

Dalton Junior College, Georgia, has developed a comprehensive staff development plan for professionals in the vocational-technical division to relate student needs to professional competencies and meet certification requirements. The plan consists of a rationale or stated need and general goals, policies, and procedures. As a component of the plan, local school goals were related to student needs in the form of twenty-two student goals. Additionally, improvement practices designed to meet student goals were written as teacher and administrator objectives and divided into seven categories of general competencies. Identified in the next section of plan were operating policies, procedures, and special considerations followed by a section addressing educational personnel needs assessment. Specific procedures in the preparation phase of the plan were established and certification records were signed by the director once these procedures were completed. A system for on-the-job assessment was also established. Training agreements, developed cooperatively, were designed to assist in developing competencies to match indicated needs. There are advantages for schools who do develop a comprehensive plan, such as constancy in some procedures for different activities and the identification of policies and objectives prior to training activities. A comprehensive plan must still be designed to accomodate the needs of the school system where it will be used. (FP)

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# LOCAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

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Local vocational education agencies place a high priority on recruiting and maintaining instructional staff with up-to-date skills and knowledge. Some local systems have designed professional personnel development programs which assist instructional staff in updating and upgrading their skills; and in some cases, to assist staff in meeting requirements for teacher certification renewal. Personnel development is a planned program designed to prepare educational personnel to implement specific local improvement activities directed toward locally determined student needs.

Assessing student needs is a local responsibility. Many local systems are also obligated to assess the results of pre- and in-service training of personnel. Therefore, staff development is one method of relating the educational needs of learners to the competencies of professional staff and the effectiveness of program development. Even though certification is the individual's responsibility, the local

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agency is often very active in providing assistance not only with the paperwork, but in providing guidance to help individuals plan for re-certification.

In some instances, the challenge of meeting teacher certification requirements alone has motivated school systems to develop local staff development plans. However, in instances where it is neither feasible nor possible for a local system to design and conduct specific specialized staff development activities, statewide training programs may be available. For example, computer processing students have a need to know the latest developments in computer technology; yet, a single school system may not have resources available to train a limited number of instructors.

At Dalton Junior College in Dalton, Georgia, we have developed a comprehensive staff development plan for professional personnel in the Vocational-Technical Division. The plan is comprehensive in that participants may receive staff development units toward certification. Also, through the coordination efforts of the staff development coordinator and university officials, individuals are able to receive University of Georgia or Georgia State University credit for a locally planned and conducted staff development project.

This morning I am going to give you an overview of the Dalton Junior College plan for development of vocational staff. Initially, the comprehensive or master plan was developed. A comprehensive plan assures flexibility in designing specific training activities so that individual needs can be addressed. In other words, the comprehensive plan does not identify one specific training activity. Its sole purpose is to spell out the policies and procedures of all training activities; and therefore, to serve as a foundation for individual staff development projects.

The staff development plan which was submitted by the Vocational-Technical Division of the College and approved by the State Department of Education consisted of the following components: (1) rationale which stated the need for a staff development program, and (2) the general goals, policies and procedures of the plan. This section addressed the relationship of the local school goals to individual student needs. In this particular plan, the goals for staff development were stated to emphasize the needs of vocational-technical students. Twenty-two different student goals were synthesized from the Dalton Junior College official statement of purpose, the Georgia State Plan for the Administration of Vocational Education, and the Goals for Education of Georgia. For example, specific student-oriented goals included in the plan were:

1. Students develop vocational-technical and/or paraprofessional competency to enter the work force upon completion of vocational or technical training

2. Students develop work habits and attitudes which complement their job skills and help them to become dependable and productive workers

3. Students develop skills necessary to secure a job, maintain a job, and advance in their chosen occupation

4. Students are provided an educational program designed to serve those who are gifted or those who have special needs, handicaps, or disadvantages

5. Students have access to and are encouraged to enroll in educational programs which may fall outside the realm of traditional occupations, but which are designed to alleviate sex role bias and sex discrimination

6. Students possess proficiency in reading, English, and mathematics.

The complete list of goals provided a frame of reference from which other student-oriented goals evolved. As instructors participated in a staff development activity, they identified other appropriate student goals and these were also included in their particular training agreement.

The next component of the comprehensive plan identified improvement practices which were designed to meet the student goals. These were included in the plan as teacher and administrator objectives. Competencies considered generic to all subjects and levels of teaching were identified by the "Beginning Teacher Evaluation Project" at the University of Georgia (1977). That list, with slight revisions and modifications, was adopted for the Dalton Junior College staff development plan. Broad general competencies included the following seven categories: (1) instructing, (2) providing the learning environment, (3) managing instruction, (4) planning, (5) evaluating learners, (6) improving the instructional program, and (7) being a professional. Each general competency was defined and broken down into specific competencies.

Operating policies, procedures, and special considerations were identified in the next section of the comprehensive plan. For instance, it is a good idea to officially verify that staff development goals are consistent with the system's goals and with improvement objectives. The system superintendent should review the staff development plan and verify the appropriateness of the broad general goals by signing an approval form. Provision should be made on the form for suggestions, comments, and/or revisions.

The next section of the comprehensive plan addressed educational personnel needs assessment. The needs assessment may be conducted as a formal or informal activity. The appropriate individual responsible for staff development should meet with faculty members on an individual or small group basis to help determine and clarify individual staff development needs.

The section on local education agency approval stated that participation in staff development activities would be approved on an individual basis and that training plans addressing individual needs would be

developed as self-contained units. These training plans would be submitted to the Georgia Department of Education as a snap-on or an appendix to the comprehensive plan. The Department of Education must approve the training plan before the training activity can be implemented. The format and individual components of the training agreements were also described in this section of the comprehensive plan.

A specific approval procedure for individuals desiring staff development units was established. Participants were asked to complete an application for staff development unit approval prior to any training activities. The application was used to record necessary information about the participant and the proposed staff development units; and dates which indicated a time frame for the activity were recorded. Also, it was desirable to list specific objectives, activities, and any special assistance or resources needed to complete the staff development project. Often, the staff development coordinator assisted the participant in completing the form since some of the information called for involved planning the actual training agreement. The completed form was signed by the Vocational-Technical Division chairperson, the staff development coordinator, and the participant. One copy of the form was filed in the participant's personal folder and the participant was given a copy.

Participant responsibilities, special considerations, expectations and concerns were included in the preparation phase of the plan. Certification records were signed by the director or his designee at the time the preparation phase was satisfactorily completed by the participants. The following five obligations were met by participants during the preparation phase.

1. Met with the staff development coordinator for the purpose of planning an individual schedule of professional development activities. A written agreement was developed for each participant and a copy was filed with the staff development coordinator.

2. Attended a minimum of ten clock hours of instruction for each staff development unit as verified by attendance records maintained by the instructors and filed with the staff development coordinator.

3. Achieved and demonstrated a predetermined level of competency based on the certification renewal activity.

4. An attendance policy was stated. No more than 10 percent of the total contact hours with the staff development coordinator were allowed as excused absences. Interpretation of "excused" absences was left to the discretion of the staff development coordinator in each individual situation. Participants were responsible for rearranging meeting times to make-up excused absences at the convenience of the staff development coordinator.

5. Dates indicating a time frame in which the staff development activities were to take place were identified. For example, the staff development coordinator would conduct, supervise, and evaluate staff development activities from _____ to _____. Conferences would be scheduled for _____ _____, _____, _____, to assist faculty in developing individual staff development plans (contracts). Individual and small group conferences would be conducted intermittently as necessary. At least one prescheduled conference upon completion of the staff development activities would be required.

An individual who failed to attain satisfactory completion of the preparation phase would terminate training and on-the-job assessment was not scheduled. The individual could repeat the preparation phase the next time the staff development program was offered.

At this point, a clear distinction must be made between certification renewal and employment. The intent of certification renewal was that the individual acquire new knowledge (skills, attitudes, and competencies) and be able to put these into action in the work setting. The basis for certification renewal was not that the individual continue to demonstrate the new knowledge, but that he demonstrate that it had been acquired. Whether or not the individual continued to demonstrate

new competencies in his work setting was a problem for school management and leadership. In other words, the continuing demonstration of a competency addressed itself to the employment factor.

A system for on-the-job assessment was included in the comprehensive plan. This particular plan specified that at least three periodic evaluations would be conducted for each participant. The evaluations were designed to serve as a check on the progress of participants and to provide guidance and direction. Successful completion of the staff development activity was determined by the evaluators on the basis of objective evidence such as the selection, organization, management, and utilization of instructional equipment and materials by the participant.

As stated previously, recommendations for certification renewal were based on satisfactory completion of the preparation phase of the training activity. The procedures for recommending staff development credit may be summarized as follows:

1. Verification by the staff development coordinator that the required number of contact hours was completed by the participant

2. Verification by the staff development coordinator that the participant met all the objectives identified in the preparation phase of the training activity

3. Verification by the evaluation team that the participant successfully completed the on-the-job performance phase

4. Verification by the appropriate individual that the reported information was correct

The remaining sections of the Dalton Junior College staff development plan for vocational-technical personnel identified the staff development coordinator, a system of record keeping, and a process for participants who desired to appeal the recommendation for certification renewal.

Special forms, such as administrative approval forms, a participant application, and necessary State Department forms were included in the

appendices to the comprehensive plan. The following forms were included in this particular plan: (1) Dalton Junior College Vocational-Technical Division Approval form,(2) Application for Staff Development Unit Approval, and (3) Georgia Department of Education, Certification Renewal (Individual Permanent Record, Local Staff Development) form.

The initial development of a comprehensive plan to meet professional personnel development needs was a time consuming and involved process. However, a comprehensive plan spelled out the logistics of implementing local staff development efforts; and served as a frame of reference for a variety of training projects. As indicated earlier, as soon as the application for staff development was approved, the participant was ready to begin planning a training agreement.

Training agreements were developed cooperatively by the participant and the staff development coordinator. The basic content of the individual training agreement was derived from the comprehensive plan with some variation to meet individual instructor needs. For instance, a particular training activity may be designed which assists an instructor in meeting selected student goals or teacher competencies which were identified in the comprehensive plan.

Training agreements were designed to assist instructors in developing competencies where external and/or self assessment indicated a need. Whenever appropriate, university representatives or individuals from business and industry assisted in the planning and evaluation. Training agreements were the local system's opportunity to address individual staff development needs. They reinforced existing priorities and they were easily revised whenever necessary.

Training agreements developed at Dalton Junior College consisted of the following components: (1) title of the staff development activity,

(2) number of staff development units, (3) description of the staff development activity, (4) broad range goals, (5) specific student goals being addressed, (6) improvement practice(s) to be implemented, (7) objectives, activities, and competencies needed for implementing the improvement practices, (8) a preparation plan that specified who, when, how, and where the activities would be conducted, and (9) the evaluation procedure.

School systems that develop and implement a comprehensive plan for professional development enjoy several advantages. Some procedural aspects of staff development such as the program coordinator, a system of record keeping, and appeal channels will not vary from one activity to the next. Once these items are clarified, it is not necessary to reiterate them each time an individual applies for staff development credit. In other words, a comprehensive plan can serve as a foundation for a variety of staff development activities. Therefore, professional personnel are assured of an opportunity to keep their knowledge, skills, and attitudes current with business and industry.

Another advantage of a comprehensive professional development plan is that important procedures, policies, and objectives are identified prior to the beginning of actual training activities; and these remain consistent from one participant and activity to the next. This is one way of maintaining consistency between organizational goals and personal goals.

A locally conceived staff development plan should be designed to fit the unique situational variables and constraints of the particular school system. The school system's resources such as materials and support staff, the organizational climate, existing staff competencies, and budget limitations are important technicalities that vary from school to school.

The current emphasis on improving the quality of existing vocational-technical education programs makes a variety of pre- and in-service training activities very desirable. If vocational educators are to meet the challenges of operating and maintaining vocational programs and services which are congruent with the employment factor, local education agencies need to design professional personnel training projects which may be adapted to multiple components of vocational-technical education.